CLAIMS

1. An external skin treatment composition comprising, based upon total weight of the composition, 0.001% by mass or more of a diol compound having the formula (I), (II), (III) or (IV) or the derivative thereof and a balance of a carrier:

$$\begin{array}{c|c}
R & OH \\
\downarrow & \downarrow \\
O & CH & CH \\
H_2 & H_2
\end{array}$$
(11)

15

5

wherein R indicates a benzyl group or phenyl group.

25

- 2. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 3-hexine-2,5-diol having the formula (I).
- 3. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol derivative is a glycerin derivative having the formula (II).

- 4. An external skin treatment composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 2,2-dimethyl-1-phenyl-1,3-propanediol having the formula (III).
- 5. An external skin preparation composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the diol compound is 2,4,7,9-tetramethyl-5-decine-4,7-diol having the formula (IV).
 - 6. An external skin preparation composition as claimed in claim 1, wherein the content of the diol compound or its derivatives is 0.001 to 10% by mass, based upon the total weight of the composition.
 - 7. An antimicrobial agent comprising a diol compound having the formula (I), (II), (III) or (IV) or the derivative thereof.

5

10

15

20

25

30

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
R & OH \\
 & & | \\
 & CH & OH \\
 & & CH & OH \\
 & & & H_2 & H_2
\end{array}$$
(11)

wherein R indicates a benzyl group or a phenyl group.

- 8. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 3-hexine-2,5-diol having the formula (I).
- 9. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol derivative is a glycerin derivative having the formula (II).

10

- 10. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 2,2-dimethyl-1-phenyl-1,3-propanediol having the formula (III).
- 11. An antimicrobial agent as claimed in claim 7, wherein the diol compound is 2,4,7,9-tetramethyl-5-decine-4,7-diol having the formula (IV).